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Death of Robert F. Kennedy

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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July 30, 1968

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)

Mr. President:

When was it that Robert Francis Kennedy died? On what day and in what month? Was it in the morning, afternoon, or night? Is it that grief grows over so quickly that we cannot remember clearly? Or is it that horror piled upon horror blocks the remembrance of horror?

If we would record the facts of his passing on this day of eulogy, it is to the chronicle of these depressing times that we are compelled to turn.

Robert Francis Kennedy died on Thursday, June 6, 1968, at 1:44 a.m. in Los Angeles.

The memory of the moment may falter, but not the remembrance of the man. In time's passing, moreover, it will be seen, with growing clarity, what Robert F. Kennedy was and why he was.

I speak now not of his family, of his wife and his children. Theirs is the clarity of understanding which emerges from the depths of great personal grief. They know what Robert F. Kennedy was and why. A son in a far-off continent looking for a hand that is not there knows what his father was and why.

Nor do I speak of those of us who were colleagues, associates and friends. We, too, can feel what Robert F. Kennedy was and why. In the Senate, we can sense it most, perhaps, in the disquiet in the nation, in this disquiet which responds to no patent remedy, in this disquiet for which he sought personal involvement as a source of remedy.

Rather I speak of the people, the people in the streets of America who once touched his hand. I speak of the people who touched the touch as it was carried from hand to hand. That touch reveals all that Robert Francis Kennedy was to the nation and why. It reaches to all that is yet to be and

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will be before there comes again in the nation a freedom from the shrouded fears of these times.

People will remember Robert Francis Kennedy when the children in this land play together and grow together and then work and live together in a new national unity forged of an equal decency and dignity for all.

People will remember Robert Francis Kennedy when there is an end of Viet Nams, when nations at last put aside the ancient hates and suffocating hostilities in a new dedication to the building of a more rational and responsible world order.